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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of the Solicitor

Annual Report on Management Improvement

August 22, 1952

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A. During the fiscal year 1952 the following major projects were undertaken:

1. Work simplification in field offices. A survey of field operations was made by a committee of Regional Attorneys. There are set forth below the major recommendations of the committee which were adopted:

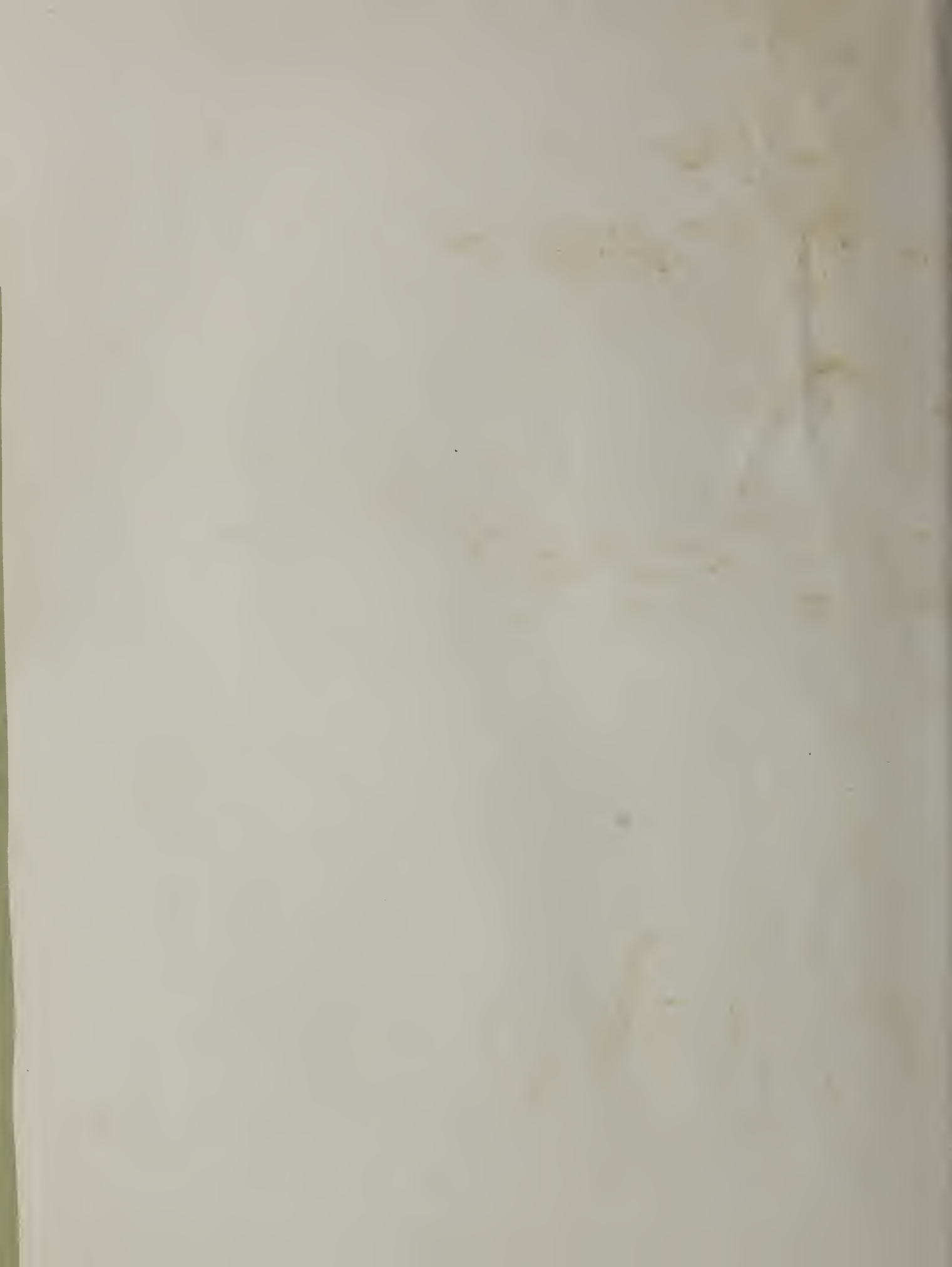
(a) The examination of abstracts of title in Rural Electrification Administration cases where the total investment will not exceed \$50,000 was eliminated. In these cases the realty and improvements represent but a minor element of the security for the loan and in any event the title opinion of the borrower's attorney is reviewed.

(b) Forms are to be developed for the preparation of claims in decedent and bankruptcy cases which are to be filled out by administrative officials and submitted to the Regional Attorney only for examination for legal sufficiency. Previously the claim was prepared in the Regional office from data furnished by the administrative agency.

(c) The approval by the Regional Attorneys of fidelity bonds covering Farmers Home Administration employees was eliminated. The Departmental Regulations do not require the approval of these bonds by the Office of the Solicitor and Farmers Home Administration was requested to eliminate its requirement for this approval.

2. Improvement in the operations of the General Services Section. The following improvements were made during the fiscal year in the operations of the General Services Section:

(a) Records pertaining to procurement, property, telephones and space were decentralized to the Property and Supplies Unit and consolidated with records previously maintained by that unit. This has simplified the maintenance of records and greatly increased the efficiency of the unit.



(b) The Property and Supply Unit and the Communications and Records Unit were consolidated in the space previously occupied by the Communications and Record Unit. This resulted in increased efficiency together with a saving of 680 sq. ft. of office space and \$240 per year in telephone bills.

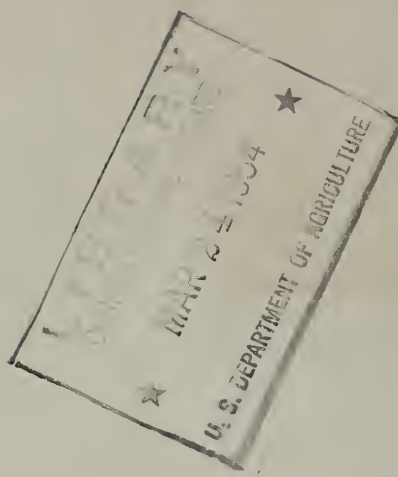
(c) A comprehensive relative index to the records classification outline was prepared. This index greatly facilitates the classification and location of correspondence in the files.

(d) The General Services Section is located on the first floor of the South Building and keeps its more active files in that location. However, it is assigned 1,200 sq. ft. of space in the attic of the South Building for the storing of records. Material in the attic storage was re-arranged and classified and the location of the various types of material was reflected on a master chart which is kept on the first floor. Through the use of this chart it is now feasible to send a messenger to the attic storage for material.

(e) The carding on Form AD-172 of correspondence pertaining to the Administrative Division was eliminated and a routing stamp substituted. This procedure was found to be quite satisfactory for the Administrative Division and eliminates a great deal of typing.

B. The following project has been selected for study in the fiscal year 1953:

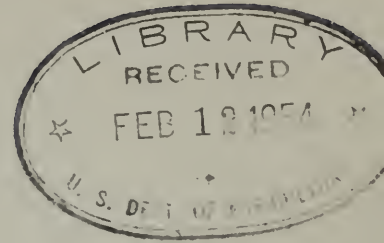
1. Developing a knowledge and understanding of the legal problems of the Department as a whole, particularly among attorneys in the lower grades. Attorneys in the Office of the Solicitor are necessarily assigned to a particular division. Consequently they do not come into direct contact with all of the legal problems that the Office is required to handle. The supervising attorneys learn of these problems principally at the Solicitor's weekly staff meetings. It is planned to have one attorney from each division, in addition to the division chief, attend the weekly staff meetings for a portion of the year. By a process of rotation it is hoped that each attorney in the Office will have an opportunity to attend at least several staff meetings during the year. It is believed that in this way the attorney's interest in the Department will be enhanced and his training for filling other jobs, if needed, will be improved.



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of the Solicitor

Annual Report on Management Improvement

August 28, 1953



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A. During the fiscal year 1953 the following projects were undertaken:

1. Simplification of legal work incident to rural electrification and telephone programs. A survey of the legal work in connection with the programs of the Rural Electrification Administration was undertaken. As a result the following changes were made:

- (a) The responsibility for approval of Rural Electrification Administration borrowers' attorneys and attorneys' fees was transferred from this office.
- (b) The microfilming of rights-of-way and easements in connection with loans which had been done in the Office of the Solicitor was eliminated and the borrowers were made responsible for furnishing copies of these documents.
- (c) Developed a standard form of telephone loan contract for cooperative borrowers.

2. Improvements in the administrative services. The following are illustrative of some of the improvements made in the operations of the Administrative Division during the fiscal year.

- (a) The recording of incoming mail on Form AD-172, Mail Control Slip, in the Washington office was discontinued. Incoming mail is now recorded on daily mail docket sheets by organizational units.
- (b) A simplified form of receipt was devised for acknowledging the receipt of law books.
- (c) An accounting manual covering current accounting practices was drafted by this office to formalize and improve accounting procedures. This manual has been submitted to the Office of Budget and Finance of the Department of Agriculture and the General Accounting Office for review and approval.

B. The following project has been selected for study in fiscal year 1954:

1. Development of an organizational and staffing pattern for the field offices of the Solicitor. A study of the field offices is currently under way in an effort to reduce the cost of furnishing legal services in connection with the field activities of the Department of Agriculture.



